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ABSTRACT

Due in part to the 1989 passage of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments, new programs designed to educate college administrators, faculty, and students about alcohol and other drug abuse have taken new directions and dimensions, involving both campuses and local communities in the process. The higher education community has responded with development of the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, a coalition of institutions initiated by the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement and coordinated to eradicate campus substance abuse. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education will process about 600 selected descriptions of campus programs from Network member institutions for inclusion in a file within the ERIC database. The programs show a wide variety in design, focus, and scope, in areas such as mentoring, peer intervention, pledges and contracts, and demonstrations. The program descriptions also show that individual institutions and student organizations themselves are following through with situation-specific remedies that serve not only the campus community but also the larger society. Contains 10 references. (GLR)

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College Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programs: An Update

Margot Sanders Eddy

It has been almost a decade since the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol Issues initiated BACCHUS (Boost Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students), a nationwide college alcohol education program that marked the beginning of broad-based efforts to address alcohol abuse on college and university campuses. In the interim, the college alcohol and drug abuse prevention movement has gained momentum and depth. Spurred in part by urgent federal legislation, programs designed to educate administrators, faculty, and students about alcohol and other drug abuse have taken new directions and dimensions, involving both campus and local communities in the process.

What Is the Impetus for Change?

While the need to address alcohol and other drug abuse on college campuses has been recognized for many years, progress toward that end has accelerated. Current efforts are largely in response to the 1989 Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments, which required colleges and universities receiving federal funds to adopt and implement a program as of October 1, 1990 for the prevention of illicit use of alcohol and other drug abuse by students, faculty and staff.

How Has the Higher Education Community Responded to the Need for Alcohol Education?

The establishment of BACCHUS in 1982 opened the door to cooperative efforts within the higher education community. This was followed by passage of the 1989 Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and development of the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, a coalition of institutions initiated by the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The Network, active since 1987 in bringing institutions together to eradicate campus substance abuse, has seen its membership rise rapidly to 1,300 and its program of training, research and administrative support expand correspondingly.

In addition, the National College Student Organizational Network for Drug and Alcohol Education, sponsored by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, has made substantial efforts to enhance student involvement in substance abuse education and intervention. In 1989, the National College Student Organizational Network produced a kit for campus program development in cooperation with BACCHUS and the National Organization of Student Assistance Programs and Professionals (National College Student Organizational Network, 1989). The kit includes:

1. information about successful BACCHUS programs, including a guide to successful and safe party-giving and assistance in personal values clarification;
2. information useful in implementing campus student assistance programs for prevention and intervention;
3. questionnaires for students, faculty, and staff to use in assessing knowledge, use and attitudes concerning campus substance abuse policy, programs, and enforcement;
4. a set of standards for campus policy, education programs, enforcement and assessment for use by student organizations in identifying specific campus needs and developing appropriate programs; and
5. a list of members of the network's student advisory board, who are available for consultation on campus program development.

How Have Individual Institutions Responded?

Growth in the active membership of the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse is representative of real growth in campus-based program development. Many programs and policies are so new that information about them is still being gathered. As material becomes available, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education will establish a file within the existing ERIC database dedicated to college alcohol and other drug prevention efforts. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education expects to process about 600 selected descriptions of campus programs from Network member institutions for inclusion in the file. The exiting literature, limited as it is, suggests that the programs in place vary widely in design, focus and scope.

What's Different About These Programs?

Many of the programs established within the individual colleges and universities are distinguished by two characteristics: design specific to the institution's circumstances and mission, and links with the immediate community. Programs receiving the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol Issues' Distinguished Program Award illustrate the creativity and thorough planning needed for effectiveness. The University of Missouri at Columbia used a metaphoric theme for alcohol and other drug abuse prevention: "Life is a deck of cards; don't get lost in the shuffle." Shenandoah University, a small institution with limited resources, implemented 25 campus activities includ-

ing a mock night court in which students, faculty and staff "arrested" for violation of drug and alcohol regulations were tried by a local judge, in front of court employees, a public defender and police officers. Involving community officials add realism to the simulated proceedings.

At Washington and Jefferson College, trained undergraduate students visited local high school to talk with their younger peers about two specific issues: misuse of prescription drugs and use of cocaine and steroids. The substance abuse education program at Eastern Michigan University planned and implemented primarily by a core group of students, combined campus athletics and community involvement. Several substance-abuse prevention events were held at university athletic gatherings, open to the community, and school staff were invited to participate. At all of these institutions, the activities of National Collegiate Drug Awareness Week represented not isolated, short-term effort but of year-round, institution-wide work to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse.

In addition, the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol Issues also awarded honorable mentions to two institutions. A diverse program planning committee that included balanced representation of students as well as faculty was one on the features given recognition at East Carolina University, and the University of North Carolina at Wilmington was acknowledged in part for involving faculty in substance abuse prevention efforts.

Other college and university programs are characterized by unique features and community participation. Wright State University's School of Medicine developed a weekend alcohol abuse intervention program of intensive education and counseling for community members that offers local courts an alternative to incarceration for alcohol-related driving offenses. The program uses medical and other university students as intervention participants, enhancing their educational opportunities while meeting local community needs (Siegal, 1988).

Using information gathered in surveys of local elementary and secondary school children, the law enforcement programs at Pittsburgh State University in Kansas developed a substance abuse curriculum for fifth and sixth graders and included it in the university's training program for law enforcement personnel. Those personnel then take the curriculum into the schools they serve ("Using Law Enforcement Personnel in Drug Free (School and Community) Education", 1989).

Central Michigan University's alcohol and drug abuse intervention and prevention program is a comprehensive, campus-based effort to coordinate and support a variety of existing campus initiatives. Some of the component programs, such as a local parent-group red-ribbon campaign and a designated driver program in cooperation with local bars, extend well into the local community (Rapaport, 1989).

When the State University of New York Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome knew that it was to become a residential institution, it moved to strengthen prohibition of drug use and self-destructive alcohol use, prevent and reduce on-campus abuse, and encourage and support student-generated alternatives.

This effort included stimulating prevention and treatment efforts at primary and secondary transfer institutions feeding into the College (Sallett, 1990).

Other distinctive features of college and university programs include mentoring, peer intervention, non-drinking or limited-drinking pledges and contracts, demonstrations of alcohol's effects on motor coordination, support groups for adult children of alcoholics, and games using student participants.

Whose Responsibility Is College Alcohol Education?

It appears that while national coalitions, networks, and associations are initiating efforts for campus substance abuse education and intervention, the colleges and universities themselves and student organizations within them are following through with situation-specific remedies. The trend is toward developing innovative solutions that serve not only the campus community but also the larger society. As higher education institutions increasingly assume responsibility for promoting healthy behavior, this trend will continue to grow.

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